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Report on the progress made by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the General Assembly, pursuant to Assembly resolution 69/200, the report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the progress made in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016.

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Report of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the progress made in preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

Introduction

1. In the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, adopted during the high-level segment of the fifty-second session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and by the General Assembly in its resolution 64/182, Member States decided that the Commission, at its fifty-seventh session, in 2014, should conduct a high-level review of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action, recommended that the Economic and Social Council should devote a high-level segment to a theme related to the world drug problem, and also recommended that the General Assembly should hold a special session to address the world drug problem.

2. The General Assembly, in its resolution 67/193 of 20 December 2012, decided to convene the special session early in 2016 and that the special session would "review the progress in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action [...] including an assessment of the achievements and challenges in countering the world drug problem, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions and other United Nations instruments".

3. In its resolution 68/197 of 18 December 2013, the General Assembly requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the United Nations organ with prime responsibility for drug control matters, to engage in the preparatory process for the special session, including by presenting proposals from the fifty-seventh and fifty-eighth sessions of the Commission through the Economic and Social Council in support of the preparatory process, including progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

4. The midterm review of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action was undertaken by the Commission during the high-level segment of its fifty-seventh session, held on 13 and 14 March 2014. Member States conducted a general debate on progress achieved and challenges in implementing the Political Declaration and Plan of Action. Round-table discussions were held on the three pillars of the Plan of Action: (a) demand reduction; (b) supply reduction; and (c) international cooperation. On 14 March 2014, participants adopted the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem. (The Joint Ministerial Statement and the outcome of the round-table discussions of the high-level segment are contained in document A/69/87-E/2014/80.)

5. At its fifty-seventh session, the Commission also adopted resolution 57/5, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be

held in 2016". In that resolution, the Commission decided to take all possible measures to ensure an adequate, inclusive and effective preparatory process for the special session by using its existing meetings and reporting entitlements in the most efficient manner. In addition, it submitted, through the Economic and Social Council, recommendations on modalities related to the preparations for and conduct of the special session. These recommendations were adopted by the Assembly in its resolution 69/200, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016", by which the Assembly decided that "the Commission, as the central policymaking body within the United Nations dealing with drug-related matters, shall lead this process by addressing all organizational and substantive matters in an open-ended manner" and, in that regard, invited the President of the General Assembly to support, guide and stay involved in the process.

6. During the second half of 2014, the Commission held a number of intersessional meetings and started an intensive consultation process with all interested stakeholders (Member States, United Nations entities and specialized organizations, international and regional organizations, and civil society) to ensure an adequate, inclusive and effective preparatory process. To facilitate that consultation process, a website was created (www.ungass2016.org) to enable global dialogue and to function as a resource tool for the Commission in its preparations for the special session.

7. At its reconvened fifty-seventh session, held from 3 to 5 December 2014, the Commission held a special segment on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016, at which Member States and other stakeholders discussed substantive and organizational matters in relation to the preparations for the special session. In its decision 57/2, the Commission decided that a "Board tasked by the Commission with the preparations for the special session would be elected based on the regional distribution of officers of the bureau of the fifty-seventh session of the Commission". In its decision 57/3, the Commission adopted a provisional agenda for the special segment to be held during the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in March 2015, on preparations for the special session. (A summary of the deliberations and the text of Commission decisions 57/2 and 57/3 are contained in document E/2014/28/Add.1-E/CN.7/2014/16/Add.1.)

8. The special segment on the preparations for the special session, held on the occasion of the fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, was convened during the first four days of the session, from 9 to 12 March 2015. A total of 131 States, as well as more than 65 non-governmental organizations and 15 international and intergovernmental organizations, participated. The special segment included a general debate on preparations for the special session (see annex I).

9. Further to the general debate, five interactive discussions were held on the following thematic areas: (a) demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion ("drugs and health"); (b) supply reduction and related measures; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation ("drugs and crime"); (c) cross-cutting issues: drugs

and human rights, youth, women, children and communities; (d) cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three international drug control conventions; and strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation; (e) alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented, balanced drug control policy; and addressing socioeconomic issues. Members of the Board tasked by the Commission with the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 chaired the interactive discussions, and presented a summary of the outcome of their respective discussions at the closing session of the special segment (see annex II).

10. During its fifty-eighth session, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs adopted resolution 58/8, entitled "Special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016", which consisted of two parts. In the first part (operative paragraphs 1-5), the Commission agreed on organizational arrangements for the period leading up to and during the "special segment on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016" that would be held on the occasion of the reconvened fifty-eighth session of the Commission in December 2015 and on the occasion of the fifty-ninth session of the Commission in March 2016. The second part of resolution 58/8 (operative para. 6) was a stand-alone resolution that the Commission decided to recommend to the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the Assembly. It contained recommended modalities for the special session itself, including proposed dates (19-21 April 2016) and format (a general debate and five interactive multi-stakeholder round tables focusing on the same themes as those dealt with during the interactive discussions at the March 2015 session), as well as provisions on the preparation by the Commission of a "short, substantive, concise and action-oriented document comprising a set of operational recommendations", to be recommended for adoption at the special session.

11. Also at its fifty-eighth session, the Commission adopted decision 58/14, entitled "Provisional agenda for the special segment to be held during the reconvened fifty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016", and decision 58/15, entitled "Preliminary provisional agenda for the special segment to be held during the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, on preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016". (More detailed information on the special segments on the preparations for the 2016 special session, as well as the text of Commission resolution 58/8, including the draft resolution to be recommended by the Economic and Social Council for adoption by the Assembly, and Commission decisions 58/14 and 58/15, can be found in document E/2015/28-E/CN.7/2015/15.)

Annex I

General debate on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

1. At the 2nd, 3rd and 4th meetings, on 9 March 2015, the Commission held the general debate of its special segment, on the preparations for the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016.

2. Statements were made by the representatives of Colombia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Bolivia (Plurinational State of), New Zealand, Afghanistan, the Russian Federation, the United States of America, Ghana, Australia, Mexico, Portugal, Argentina, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Uruguay, France, Kyrgyzstan, Spain, the Philippines, Japan, Ecuador, Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Poland, Sweden, China, Austria, Thailand, Peru, Indonesia, the Netherlands, Algeria, South Africa, Tunisia, Namibia, El Salvador, Canada, Costa Rica, Norway, Italy, Morocco, Guatemala, Brazil, Chile, Hungary, Switzerland, Cuba, Egypt, Turkey, Qatar and the Republic of Korea.[1]

3. Statements were also made by the observers for the Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific, the Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group) of the Council of Europe and the League of Arab States. The observer for the Sovereign Military Order of Malta also made a statement.

4. It was noted that, despite progress made, the world drug problem continued to pose challenges for the international community and should be addressed on the basis of the principle of common and shared responsibility.

5. Many speakers reaffirmed their commitment to the achievement of the targets and goals set out in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem, and the objectives set out in the Joint Ministerial Statement of the 2014 high-level review by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the implementation by Member States of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

6. Several speakers emphasized that the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 was an important milestone on the way to 2019 and would be a unique and valuable opportunity to take stock of achievements and challenges encountered in addressing the world drug problem and to discuss regional realities, new approaches and emerging trends in an open and transparent format.

7. Speakers reaffirmed that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, as the United Nations organ with the prime responsibility for drug control matters, should

[1] Owing to time constraints, some of the statements mentioned were only made available on the website of the Commission.

continue to lead the preparatory process for the special session, in coordination with the President of the General Assembly.

8. Support was expressed for the proposal of holding a three-day special session and the organization of interactive, high-level round tables in parallel with the general debate, with the involvement of all stakeholders, including the scientific community and civil society. It was noted that any outcome prepared by the Commission for adoption at the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 2016 should be short and concise. The idea of reflecting the salient points raised during the high-level round tables in a Chair's summary was welcomed.

9. Many speakers expressed appreciation for efforts undertaken by the Commission to ensure an inclusive preparatory process for the special session and emphasized the importance of the effective involvement in that process of all relevant United Nations agencies and bodies, relevant intergovernmental organizations, the scientific community, national parliaments and civil society. The importance of actively and meaningfully engaging civil society was highlighted and the establishment of and contributions by the civil society task force and the scientific network were welcomed.

10. Many speakers emphasized the need to safeguard as well as to fully and adequately implement the three international drug control conventions, which continued to be the cornerstone of the international drug control system.

11. Some speakers noted that the current drug control policies had not yielded the expected results in terms of reducing supply and demand and that new approaches were needed. Several speakers stressed that any new approaches should be implemented in the framework of the three international drug control conventions. Concerns regarding decriminalization and legalization were raised by a number of speakers.

12. The need for an evidence-based, balanced, integrated and multidisciplinary approach in relation to supply and demand reduction strategies, in full compliance with the three international drug control conventions, the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and international law, was highlighted.

13. Several speakers mentioned the importance of discussing the proportionality of sentences and alternatives to incarceration and, in a wider framework, the importance of the promotion of drug policies based on respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, solidarity, the rule of law and human rights. Several speakers reaffirmed their opposition to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, including for drug-related offences. Other speakers noted that national sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected and that sentencing for drug-related offences should be determined by the national legislation of States.

14. It was stressed that a balanced approach to the world drug problem should take into account that drug addiction was a health problem and that national drug demand reduction strategies should include primary prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery and social reintegration. A number of speakers noted the need to introduce and implement harm reduction measures. Other speakers stressed that, as part of a balanced approach to addressing the world drug problem, law enforcement measures should also be maintained.

15. The importance of ensuring the adequate availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion and abuse, was emphasized by many speakers.

16. It was underlined that the international community should undertake efforts to prevent the adverse effects of drug-related violence on societies and communities. The need to address poverty, unemployment and social marginalization in the context of sustainable alternative development programmes was stressed.

17. Several speakers drew attention to integrated and sustainable crop control strategies and highlighted the importance of alternative development programmes, including preventive alternative development programmes, as part of the broader economic development agenda. The need to strengthen regional and international cooperation to support alternative development programmes, while taking into account the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development, was highlighted by a number of speakers.

18. Speakers called for the enhancement of regional and international cooperation in order to counter the illicit cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking of drugs, on the basis of the three international drug control conventions as well as the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. The need to counter new and emerging challenges, including by providing, upon request, support to law enforcement authorities by strengthening the exchange of information and by enhancing South-South and triangular cooperation, was noted.

19. The growing links between drug trafficking and corruption, trafficking in persons, trafficking in firearms, cybercrime and other forms of organized crime, as well as, in some cases, money-laundering and terrorism, were noted by several speakers.

20. The threat posed by synthetic drugs and the emergence of new psychoactive substances was highlighted by many speakers, as was the need to strengthen, in response, measures and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels.

21. Support was expressed for the role of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as the leading entity in the United Nations system for assisting Member States in countering the world drug problem. UNODC was requested to continue mobilizing resources for the delivery of technical assistance and for enhancing, upon request, the capacities of States, including in the fields of crime and drug prevention, law enforcement, forensic laboratories and training of personnel.

Annex II

Interactive discussions on high-level segments to be held during the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016

Interactive discussion on demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion ("drugs and health")

The interactive discussion on demand reduction and related measures, including prevention and treatment, as well as health-related issues; and ensuring the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion ("drugs and health"), held on 10 March, was presided over by Pedro Luis Moitinho de Almeida (Portugal) and led by the following panellists: Tawfik Zid (Tunisia), Jose Marlowe S. Pedregosa (Philippines), Jože Hren (Slovenia), Roberto Campa (Mexico), Michael Botticelli (United States), Lochan Naidoo (International Narcotics Control Board), Shekhar Saxena (World Health Organization (WHO)) and Diederik Lohman (Human Rights Watch).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

The importance of a comprehensive, evidence-based and health-centred approach to drug use disorders was highlighted.

Speakers emphasized that a wide and comprehensive range of effective strategies for drug prevention, early intervention and treatment existed and that action needed to be taken at all levels by Governments, international organizations and civil society to expand the coverage, quality, monitoring and evaluation of their programmes.

Speakers emphasized that prevention of drug use based on science and targeting the individual, as well as targeting social vulnerabilities, remained the cornerstone of drug demand reduction efforts, by supporting children, young people, families and communities, particularly those most at risk. Reference was made to factors such as poverty, social exclusion, stigmatization and a lack of prospects that placed people at risk of using drugs.

The availability of good-quality drug dependence treatment services that were voluntary, based on scientific evidence and medical standards and integrated into a public health approach, and the rehabilitation and reintegration of people suffering from drug disorders and dependence, were recognized as essential.

Speakers noted that the stigmatization of people who suffered from drug use disorders should be addressed, with a special focus on young people and women. It was noted that, instead of being punished, people who used drugs should be provided with integrated health and social care, treatment, reintegration and recovery-oriented services. The need to train medical professionals on how to address substance use disorders and on the use of medications to treat addiction was mentioned.

It was also mentioned that gaps in science remained, notably regarding the treatment of non-opioid users.

Four areas of focus for drug demand reduction strategies were proposed: (a) cost; (b) control; (c) the building of awareness; and (d) the use of effective models of intervention. It was noted that drug demand reduction strategies should be adapted to new challenges posed by new psychoactive drugs, cannabis addiction and patients with treatment needs for multiple diagnoses.

Some speakers noted that, in order to reduce HIV and hepatitis C infection rates among injecting drug users, harm reduction programmes, in particular needle and syringe programmes, opioid substitution treatment, voluntary HIV counselling and testing and antiretroviral therapy, should be implemented. Some speakers also noted the need to develop and implement evidence-based measures to address HIV and hepatitis C among non-injecting stimulant (cocaine, crack and amphetamine-type stimulants) users.

A number of speakers made reference to the Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS, in which Member States had made a commitment to working towards reducing transmission of HIV among people who inject drugs by 50 per cent by 2015, and underlined that that target was likely to be missed. The importance of the role of UNODC as a convening agency of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) in supporting countries in the post-2015 era with regard to reducing HIV transmission among people who use drugs and people in prisons was stressed.

Several speakers recognized that there was a high degree of discrepancy between high-income countries on the one hand and low- and middle-income countries on the other in terms of the availability of narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances for medical and scientific purposes, including for pain management and palliative care, and noted that such availability was an obligation for Governments under the three international drug control conventions and international human rights standards and norms, and as part of a balanced approach to supply and demand reduction. Particular reference was made by some speakers to the currently inadequate availability of psychotropic substances controlled under the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 that were used for the treatment of serious diseases. It was noted that adequate availability must be balanced with measures to prevent the misuse, abuse and diversion of such substances.

Interactive discussion on supply reduction and related measures; responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation ("drugs and crime")

The interactive discussion on supply reduction and related measures, responses to drug-related crime; and countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation ("drugs and crime"), held on 10 March, was presided over by Reza Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran) and led by the following panellists: Rashmi Verma (India), Evika Siliņa (Latvia), Markel Iván Mora (Panama), Paul Griffiths (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction) and Ross Bell (New Zealand Drug Foundation).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

It was emphasized that no single approach could resolve the illicit drug problem and that a balanced and sustained effort at the international level was required to achieve successful results. Reference was made to the supply reduction measures contained in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem.

Speakers highlighted the need to strengthen law enforcement cooperation at the regional and international levels, including meaningful cross-border cooperation and judicial cooperation, such as for extradition and mutual legal assistance.

It was noted that alternative development efforts had yielded good results, based on the principle of shared responsibility, supported by strong cooperation at the international level, including through the sharing of best practices and lessons learned. The importance of addressing the challenges faced by farmers following the eradication of crops was highlighted. The need to address the root causes of criminality linked to the manufacture and trafficking of drugs was also mentioned, as was the importance of strengthening development and stability in source and transit countries through enhanced partnerships.

The successful implementation of sentencing reform resulting in both decreased levels of incarceration and crime was mentioned, and the need for proportionality of punishment was stressed. In that regard, some speakers reaffirmed their opposition to the use of the death penalty, including for drug-related offences.

Some speakers noted that the traditional supply reduction performance indicators for law enforcement, such as quantities seized and the number of arrests, did not completely address the complex nature of the world drug problem and suggested using additional indicators covering further dimensions of supply reduction, such as tracing financial flows, or including the impact of drug control measures on illicit drug demand, in evaluating policies and strategies.

Some speakers highlighted the importance of tracing illicit financial flows generated by drug trafficking and emphasized the need for financial investigation training to combat money-laundering.

Some speakers noted a connection between drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime, including terrorism financing and money-laundering, while other speakers noted that that phenomenon was confined to only some parts of the world.

Some speakers noted that the Internet was increasingly being misused by organized criminal groups to facilitate drug trafficking and highlighted the need for programmes that supported capacity-building for investigating and prosecuting such crimes.

Many speakers recognized the growing threat and global nature of new psychoactive substances, emphasizing the need for international cooperation to address the problem and its relevance for the 2016 special session. To address the challenges posed by new psychoactive substances, speakers emphasized the importance of information-sharing at the regional and international levels, of improving the forensic capacity of laboratories to identify new psychoactive substances, with the guidance and cooperation of UNODC, and of the need for prioritization of the most

harmful substances, based on health risks and dependency potential. In that regard, it was proposed that the provisional scheduling of substances and scheduling based on the similarity principle be considered.

The need to maintain effective control over precursor chemicals and pre-precursors and to monitor and prevent diversion from licit sources was highlighted, as was the importance of using information technologies for real-time information exchange to identify trends in illicit manufacturing and trafficking.

The need to address existing challenges in reducing the illicit supply of controlled drugs within the framework of the international drug control conventions was stressed. It was mentioned by several speakers that innovative approaches could be identified within that framework.

Interactive discussion on cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities

The interactive discussion on cross-cutting issues: drugs and human rights, youth, women, children and communities, held on 11 March, was presided over by Károly Dán (Hungary) and led by the following panellists: Ahmed Alfares (Saudi Arabia), Juan Carlos Molina (Argentina), Ruth Dreifuss (Switzerland) and Kristina Sperkova (IOGT International).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

Speakers highlighted the importance of and their commitment to human rights, such as the right to life and health, in addressing the world drug problem.

Several speakers underlined that comprehensive health-centred and rights-based approaches, focusing on the individual and with a special focus on vulnerable groups, such as women and children, should be an integral part of drug demand reduction strategies.

The need to address obstacles to development and underlying socioeconomic issues, such as poverty, violence and social exclusion, by providing, inter alia, equal employment and education opportunities, was mentioned. It was noted that sustainable development and human rights issues should be given due consideration at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016. A reference to the right to development was also made.

It was stressed that individuals with drug use disorders required quality, widely available and accessible drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes, as well as access to health care and to evidence-based HIV prevention programmes. The importance of measures to prevent negative health and social consequences, based on scientific evidence, was noted as well. Some speakers also noted that drug demand reduction measures should be based on the three international drug control conventions, while taking full account of all applicable human rights.

The importance of ensuring adequate availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion, was highlighted.

Reference was made to the need to implement gender-sensitive policies and measures tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of female drug users and drug offenders and to mitigating the negative impact on their families.

It was underlined that drug control policies and measures should be implemented in line with the best interests of the child. That included measures to prevent drug abuse and involvement in drug offences by children, and appropriate responses by health-care and child protection services. Reference was made to the importance of early interventions, prevention and awareness-raising measures targeting young people, families and communities. The rights of victims of trafficking in drugs and the impact of social media on drug-related issues were also highlighted.

In the context of criminal justice measures, the importance of proportionality of sentencing and of alternatives to sanctions and imprisonment for non-violent drug-related offences was stressed. A number of speakers mentioned that the stigmatization and punishment of drug users had negative effects and that alternatives to criminal justice sanctions should be used to promote their recovery, social reintegration and treatment.

Several speakers reaffirmed their opposition to the use of the death penalty in all circumstances, including for drug-related offences. Other speakers noted that national sovereignty and territorial integrity should be respected. It was stressed that different countries and regions had adopted a wide range of approaches, to which due consideration should be given. The importance of taking into account cultural and traditional specificities when implementing drug policies was mentioned.

Several speakers emphasized the importance of cooperation in addressing drug-related issues at the regional and international levels, and of partnerships with the private sector and civil society. The need for inter-agency coordination and collaboration, including between agencies dealing with health, justice, law enforcement and children and young people, with a view to ensuring a balanced and comprehensive approach to addressing the world drug problem, was stressed.

Interactive discussion on cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation

The interactive discussion on cross-cutting issues: new challenges, threats and realities in preventing and addressing the world drug problem in compliance with relevant international law, including the three drug control conventions; strengthening the principle of common and shared responsibility and international cooperation, held on 11 March, was presided over by Khaled Abdel-Rahman Shamaa (Egypt) and led by the following panellists: Tingfang Wu (China), Konstantin Gobrusenko (Russian Federation), Jose Moldiz Mercado (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Pier Vincenzo Piazza (France) and Lisa Sanchez (Transform Drug Policy Foundation).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

Speakers called for a humane approach to addressing the world drug problem, while emphasizing that innovative approaches could be implemented within the framework of the international drug control conventions.

Some speakers stressed that innovative drug control policies and new legislation were needed to address the specific and changing realities of the drug control situation, which differed between regions, and advocated for an open discussion on approaches that included the decriminalization of drug use and other efforts to reduce potential negative consequences of current policies. Other speakers took note of new challenges and approaches, while emphasizing their continuing commitment to the full implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem and the international drug control conventions, which remained the cornerstone of the international drug control system.

Some speakers stressed that different countries and regions had adopted a wide range of approaches to which due consideration should be given. Reference was made to the importance of the principles of non-intervention, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Some speakers also noted the importance of taking into account cultural and traditional specificities when implementing drug policies.

The importance of placing the human being at the centre of drug control policies was emphasized. Reference was made to new challenges, such as the increase in consumption levels, as well as to the need to focus on alternative development, including preventive alternative development, and to improve the lives of people in areas affected by illicit drug cultivation. Also mentioned was the importance of continuing to address poverty and unemployment, as they were conducive to social marginalization and were consequently exploited by drug traffickers.

The need for a scientific approach to understanding and treating drug addiction was emphasized. A few speakers reported on innovative pharmacological treatments available for cannabis addiction and hepatitis C. States were urged to allocate additional resources to research and to make drug addiction treatment a priority.

Some speakers highlighted the need for enhanced cooperation in the fight against money-laundering and for improved sharing of information. It was noted that the financial basis of the illegal drug trade should be studied in order to identify illicit financial flows linked to drug trafficking, which would allow for a better understanding of the impact of those flows on the economy.

Reference was made to the increasing use of modern equipment and to increased coordination among drug trafficking and terrorist networks. Speakers called for stronger capacity-building to better control sea routes and to combat money-laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Speakers referred to the challenges posed by the increased use of the Internet, web systems and chat rooms for the purposes of sharing information on production methods and trafficking routes and ordering non-scheduled chemicals and new psychoactive substances. In that regard, delays in legislative developments and imbalances in the scope of control in different countries hindered effective action. Proposals were made for a strengthened regime to control new psychoactive substances and for increased cooperation across regions to effectively address the challenges posed by non-scheduled chemicals.

The importance of enhancing cooperation to address drug-related issues at the regional and international levels was stressed, as was the importance of partnerships with the private sector and civil society.

Interactive discussion on alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues

The interactive discussion on alternative development; regional, interregional and international cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy; addressing socioeconomic issues, held on 11 March, was presided over by Jaime Alberto Cabal Sanclemente (Colombia) and led by the following panellists: Ahmadu Giade (Nigeria), Dispanadda Diskul (Thailand), Julio Garro Galvez (Peru), Daniel Brombacher (Germany) and Fay Watson (Europe against Drugs).

Summary by the Chair

The Chair's summary of the salient points, which was not subject to negotiation, is presented below.

Several speakers stressed that poverty, lack of livelihood opportunities, vulnerability, lack of government presence, insecurity and lack of access to land were some of the key factors that fostered illicit crop cultivation. Those factors needed to be addressed in a comprehensive manner.

Speakers highlighted the importance and added value of the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016 in further assessing and advancing the issue of alternative development on the international agenda by promoting success stories relating to alternative development and viewing it from a development perspective. Speakers reiterated the importance of incorporating alternative development into the post-2015 development agenda and into sustainable development goals.

Some speakers highlighted the importance of implementing the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development and noted that not all policy decisions had been translated into work in the field.

A number of speakers highlighted that alternative development should be included in broader national development strategies and national drug control strategies.

Several speakers stressed that alternative development required a long-term sustainable integrated comprehensive approach, including the provision and improvement of infrastructure, roads, electricity, water and access to land, health, education and markets. The need to improve the capacity of States to implement alternative development programmes was noted.

International cooperation, including South-South cooperation, and the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, intergovernmental organizations, civil society, local communities, national and local governments and the private sector were critical for ensuring successful alternative development programmes.

Several speakers noted that where alternative development had been implemented, a sustained reduction in illicit crop cultivation had taken place.

Speakers noted that, over the years, there had been a marked decrease in official development assistance allocated to alternative development, which had resulted in many farming communities not receiving development assistance.

Some speakers pointed to the need to extend the provision of alternative development to countries, particularly in Africa, where cannabis was cultivated, with a view to addressing poverty and vulnerability.

Several speakers highlighted the importance of market access and of establishing market links for alternative development products, stressing that the products needed to be of quality and competitive.

The importance of preventive alternative development and the need to share best practices and lessons learned on alternative development were highlighted.

Several speakers highlighted the importance of assessing the impact of alternative development not only through illicit crop cultivation estimates, but also through human development indicators, thus ensuring that alternative development was measured from the socioeconomic perspective of improving livelihoods.

Some speakers highlighted that alternative development must be designed with a human-centred approach in order to involve communities in all phases of project implementation.

Some speakers stressed the importance of ensuring the proper sequencing of alternative development, eradication and law enforcement activities when designing actions to combat illicit crop cultivation.

Several speakers welcomed the chapter on alternative development in the forthcoming World Drug Report 2015, noting that it could serve as an important element in guiding Member States in preparing for the deliberations at the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem to be held in 2016. The important role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and of UNODC in advancing work in the area of alternative development was mentioned.